

Graeme Charles on Co-operation in The Devondaler



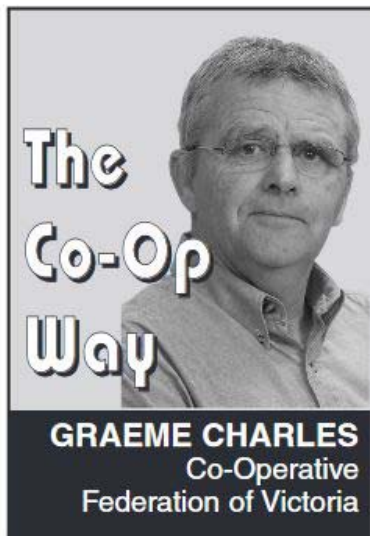
Graeme Charles was the Executive Officer and Secretary of the Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd between 1999 and 2002 and Deputy Chairman between 2002 and 2008 – the peak body for co-operatives in the Australian State of Victoria.

Between 2006 and 2008 Graeme Charles was a guest columnist for The Devondaler – the monthly newspaper of Murray Goulburn Co-operative Co. Limited. The Devondaler was established in 1986.

The Co-operative is one of Australia's largest with 2200 dairy farmer members and more than 2000 employees.

Twenty of these columns have been reproduced.

Could Health Co-operatives help solve the shortage of doctors in rural areas?



Health care co-operatives have a proven track record of providing high quality health care which meet a broad range of community and individual needs. Worldwide over 53 million people are members of health co-operatives.

In Canada, for example, over 1 million people receive high standard care across eight provinces. Across British Columbia, health care co-ops are creating innovative solutions to meet the unmet needs of communities struggling with declining health care services.

Back home here in Victoria, Westgate Health Co-operative Ltd. operates general practice clinics in South Kingsville and Newport in Melbourne's inner western suburban area. Westgate has over 7000 members and

employs 30 staff including 11 GP's and 2 dentists. It is the only general practice in the City of Hobsons Bay that bulk-bills all its patients.

Benefits of membership of Westgate Health Co-op. include:

- Bulk-billing for medical services
- One free dental check-up per year
- Substantial discounts on other dental services
- Discounts on allied health services
- Having a say on local, community health issues

In an area where accessibility to and affordability of medical services is a real issue, Westgate Health Co-operative is clearly demonstrating that there is a place for co-operatives in our health care system. They may not be the solution in every case, but they offer an alternative to the current models of health care service that deserve closer examination.

In conjunction with its member co-op Westgate Health Co-operative, the Co-operative Federation of Victoria is developing a campaign to highlight the health care co-operative model. The campaign will target Federal and State governments, communities and individuals with an interest in health care.

If you are interested in discovering more about the potential for a health care co-operative in your community contact the Federation via our website - www.australia.coop/

1 May 2007



List of Graeme Charles articles published between 2006 - 2008

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The importance of co-operatives in agriculture across the world.	2 October 2006	2
What Gives Co-operatives A Bad Name	21 November 2006	3
Murray Goulburn one of only two Australian co-operatives in the ICA Global 300	No date	4
UK Co-operative College and Co-operative Federation of Victoria helping Murray Goulburn members co-operative identity	!! December 2006	6
Review of The Democracy Principle: Farmer Co-operatives in Twentieth Century Australia by David Griffiths	12 February 2007	7
Particular Challenges for Co-operatives – Funding Expansion	12 February 2007	8
Particular Challenges for Co-operatives Part 2 Effective Democracy, or to put it another way, Members In Control	12 February 2007	9
Why are we ignoring co-operative solutions?	10 March 2007	10
A Co-operative AWB	29 March 2007	11
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Cooperatives get together in New Zealand to discuss the Co-operative Advantage of Dairy Business	21 November 2007	17
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Agricultural Co-operatives are Financially Competitive	7 February 2008	19
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Small is sometimes beautiful	30 September 2008	Number unknown